

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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R 150250 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3193

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 10739

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: REINFORCEMENTS FOR CHUONG THIEN

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM CAN THO JUNE 14
REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE CAN THO 0447

1. ARVN IS REPORTEDLY BOLSTERING ITS FORCES IN CHUONG THIEN TO COUNTER AN EXPECTED VC ATTEMPT TO SEIZE THE PROVINCE.
 2. A CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER LEARNED FROM A RELIABLE SOURCE THAT MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI HAS DIRECTED EACH OF THE OTHER FIFTEEN SECTOR COMMANDERS TO DETAIL AT LEAST ONE RF BATTALION TO CHUONG THIEN. PHONG DINH PROVINCE HAS REPORTEDLY RUSHED FOUR SUCH BATTALIONS INTO THE CHUONG THIEN BREACH. THE SAME SOURCE ALSO CLAIMED THAT A MARINE BATTLE GROUP FROM THE SAIGON AREA IS IN CHUONG THIEN.
 3. THESE REINFORCEMENTS ADD TO THREE RANGER BATTALIONS AND A REGIMENT OF THE 9 TH DIVISION WHICH RECENTLY BEGAN OPERATING IN THE PROVINCE. THE CHANGE OF COMMANDERS AT
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THE 21 ST DIVISION ON JUNE 11 IS ALSO INTENDED TO MAKE THAT UNIT MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE DEFENSE OF CHUONG THIEN.

4. WITH THESE REPORTED REINFORCEMENTS, RVNAF HAS ALMOST 40 MANEUVER BATTALIONS, ALONG WITH BACP PF PLATOONS, IN CHUONG THIEN. ARRAYED AGAINST THEM ARE FOUR VC/ NVA INFANTRY REGIMENTS, TWO ARTILLERY BATTALIONS, TWO SAPPER BATTALIONS, AND ABOUT 2000 LOCAL FORCE TROOPS, GUERRILLAS, AND VCI.

5. THE LATEST REPORTS OF REINFORCEMENTS ARE UNCONFIRMED, BUT A VICE CONSUL VISITING VI THANH JUNE 12 NOTED SIGNIFICANT TROOP MOVEMENTS IN AND OUT OF TOWN AS WELL AS A CONSTANT BARRAGE OF OUTGOING 105 AND 155 MM ARTILLERY THROUGH THE MORNING AND EARLY AFTERNOON.

6. SECTOR OFFICERS IN CHUONG THIEN ARE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO MEET WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS UNLESS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED BY THE PROVINCE CHIEF. THESE RESTRICTIONS, IMPOSED ONLY RECENTLY, COULD BE RELATED TO RUMORS CIRCULATING IN CHUONG THIEN THAT QUOTE THE AMERICANS HAVE MADE A DEAL TO CONCEDE CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE TO THE VC UNQUOTE. SIGNED BARNES UNQUOTE
WHITEHOUSE

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

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